



Senior Medicare Patrol **Medicare Fraud Informer**

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SMP MISSION STATEMENT *to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.*

Welcome

This is the first issue of the ***Delaware SMP Medicare Fraud Informer***. This newsletter is designed to bring you up-to-date information about how to detect and report Medicare fraud, waste and abuse. We'll also give you information on upcoming events and how our volunteers are here to help you and how you can become a volunteer and help others.

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SMP Toll Free Number: 1-800-223-9074

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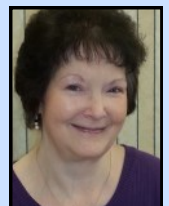
DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities

SMP Informer Newsletter

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Message from
SMP Project Director

Andrea Rinehart



I am thrilled to be back working for the Senior Medicare Patrol as the Project Director. I say “back” because taking on the director role is something of a homecoming for me. Back in the years before this federal program was nationally unified under the Senior Medicare Patrol name, each state receiving program funds called their program something different. Here in Delaware we were the “Delaware Medicare Fraud Alert”, a program I helped start in 1999.

I am excited by the many changes that have occurred since we first started. We have a national data base that helps quantify information so Delaware can measure its progress, giving the volunteers and staff credit for their accomplishments (which are all due to the diligence of Medicare beneficiaries reporting suspected Medicare fraud, waste and abuse). We enjoy guidance and assistance from a National SMP Resource Center, providing us with access not only to a vast Resource Library to which all states contribute, but also to online training and assessments open to both volunteers and staff. And finally, I have had the good fortune to walk right into a seasoned team of volunteers and staff who, clearly, already have a deep, personal ownership of this mission. Listening to the stories of the wonderful work that our volunteers have been doing since I’ve been gone boosts my enthusiasm for plunging right in to making this program the best it can possibly be.

For me, SMP is much more than simply a job. Helping to educate beneficiaries to keep them safe from becoming targets of fraud, abuse, or errors and going the extra mile when they have an issue and have nowhere to turn is a personal mission of great significance. I plan to do whatever needs to be done to advocate for persons on Medicare to be able to fulfill this mission.

Our volunteers are the heart and soul of our grassroots efforts. They are the ground troops educating and keeping a watchful eye on the Medicare beneficiaries in Delaware. I am honored to work with and learn from such a competent and seasoned group of individuals. They would not be as active without the help of two tremendous staff members, Kay Meade, Outreach and Education Specialist, and Steve O’Neill, Volunteer Services Coordinator. Their diligence and commitment to this program has developed a strong foundation for our volunteers.

If you have questions about the SMP or would like to introduce yourself please contact me at 302-255-9362 or andrea.rinehart@state.de.us.

SMP Informer – Volunteer Minute



Hello and thank you for taking the time to read the SMP Medicare Fraud Informer, Delaware's newest tool in the prevention of Medicare Fraud. My name is Steven O'Neill and I am Delaware SMP's Volunteer Services Coordinator. I come to SMP with a love of people and a passion for volunteers. In my 20+ years of working with volunteers I have learned one irrefutable fact: Volunteers are the lifeblood of an organization. I have also been fortunate enough to have worked in Delaware's criminal justice system which has helped foster my passion for protecting the citizens of Delaware.

SMP Delaware is on the frontlines of protecting current and future Medicare Beneficiaries from fraud and abuse. SMP is a grassroots program that is successful because its volunteers empower Medicare beneficiaries to detect and report healthcare fraud to prevent losses from the Medicare trust fund and protect benefits for Medicare beneficiaries. SMP Delaware Volunteers...

MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY...

- Promoting community awareness of healthcare errors, fraud and abuse in their community.
- Making one-on-one contacts with beneficiaries needing information and assistance.
- Making presentations to groups about how to avoid getting taken by scam artists.
- Hosting or helping at an exhibit at community events.
- Distributing consumer education materials about healthcare fraud.

VOLUNTEERS ARE REWARDED BY...

- Learning about the latest healthcare and identity theft scams.
- Making new friends who have similar interests.
- Using their creative skills and learning new skills through training.
- Keeping as busy as they would like, but with flexible hours.

If you would like to learn more about volunteering for SMP Delaware, please contact me at Steven.O'Neill@state.de.us, or call 302-255-9383.

Above and Beyond the Call of....Data!



Why do we try so hard to record every little interaction that happens at our table events (aka “Community Outreaches”) and our SMP Presentations (aka “Group Education Sessions”). Because our event data is our SMP Team’s report card...and as folks from the National SMP Resource Center say, “If it isn’t recorded, it didn’t happen.”

Here’s the Impact SMP has had the first half of 2015:

<u>320</u>	Simple Inquiries (questions from community)
<u>36</u>	Community Outreach Events (displays at health fairs)
<u>1686</u>	1:1 Counseling Sessions (educating consumers individually)
<u>20</u>	Group Education Sessions (group presentations)
<u>2222</u>	Consumers Reached (beneficiaries, caregivers, and agencies)
<u>56</u>	Total Outreach events (combination of outreach events and group education sessions)

How are such stellar outreach numbers even possible?

They happened because of the faithfulness and hard work of our SMP volunteers, without whom the impact of this program would be little more than a shadow. From the preparation of information packets to a willingness to make a genuine commitment to helping with events, SMP volunteers who have embraced this mission to Delaware beneficiaries are making a difference...and these statistics prove it! There are 852 beneficiaries/family members whose lives have been made safer last month because of YOUR commitment to helping them.

**Kudos to the Mighty Delaware SMP Team for making great things happen in the
FIRST STATE!!**

Medicare Automated Phone System

Did you know that you can visit MyMedicare.gov or use the 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) automated phone system *to check your Original Medicare claims*? Once your claims have been filed, they're generally ready to view within 24 hours after processing. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

The sooner you see and report errors, the sooner we can stop fraud!

Learn how to check your claims online or by using the 1-800-MEDICARE automated phone system, visit <http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Pubs/pdf/11491.pdf>.

For more information on protecting yourself from Medicare fraud and to get tips for spotting and reporting fraud, visit www.stopmedicarefraud.gov.

Health Care Scams

Here's how they work:

You see an ad on TV, telling you about a new law that requires you to get a new health care card. Maybe you get a call offering you big discounts on health insurance. Or maybe someone says they're from the government, and she needs your Medicare number to issue you a new card.

Scammers follow the headlines. When it's Medicare open enrollment season, or when health care is in the news, they go to work with a new script. Their goal? To get your Social Security number, financial information, or insurance number.

So take a minute to think before you talk: Do you really have to get a new health care card? Is that discounted insurance a good deal? Is that "government official" really from the government? The answer to all three is almost always: No.

Here's what you can do:

1. ***Stop. Check it out.*** Before you share your information, call Medicare (1-800-MEDICARE), do some research, and check with someone you trust. What's the real story?
2. ***Pass this information on to a friend.*** You probably saw through the scammer's requests. But chances are you know someone who could use a friendly reminder.

Call the Delaware Senior Medicare Patrol at 800-223-9074 to report health care scams in your area. We will examine and research your concern. If necessary, SMP will refer the report to the proper authorities for further investigation.



Check your **Medicare Summary Notice (MSN)**

If you are an Original Medicare beneficiary, you will receive a Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) every quarter that lists the health care services you have received during the previous three months, and their costs. Similarly, if you have a Medicare Advantage plan, you will receive periodic Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from your plan, listing the services you have received and their costs. Review your MSN or EOB carefully to make sure the services and provider locations are accurate. If you think you are being held wrongfully responsible for the cost of a service, contact the health care provider to request a correction. If the provider is uncooperative or if you are still suspicious, call the Delaware Senior Medicare Patrol program for further assistance at 800-223-9074.

Important SMP Tool: **Personal Health Care Journal**

A Personal Health Care Journal is a resource commonly used by SMPs. These pocket-size guides help Medicare beneficiaries, their caregivers, or family members document important information about a beneficiary's doctor visits, medical diagnoses, equipment received, and more. Kept up-to-date, the journals can be used later to cross-check services outlined on MSNs and EOBs. To request a Personal Health Care Journal please call 800-223-9074 and ask for the Delaware Senior Medicare Patrol.

Personal Health Care Journal
U.S. Administration on Aging

Take an active role in your own health care!

Tales from the Trenches

(True stories of interactions with consumers at SMP events)

Whenever we gather our energy and enthusiasm to meet our beneficiaries and family members at events, we share a common hope that we might be able to provide some information that will trigger an eye-opening moment that will, in turn, produce some behavioral change resulting in a greater level of health care fraud safety for that person and his or her family members. The following interaction that took place during the June 18 Modern Maturity Health Fair illustrates the impact of SMP in guiding beneficiaries to safer practices:

After listening to our SMP volunteers about the dangers of carrying your Medicare card, in a wallet or in purse, a beneficiary skeptically replied, “Yeah...but I carry my card anyway ‘cause that’s just me.”

We responded by sharing with her about the Medicare “Card Trick” alternative to carrying one’s actual Medicare card around (creating a photocopied card with most of the numbers blacked out) and her eyes grew big as she listened intently. Then she slowly responded:

“Well, now...that makes a lot of sense. Actually I WILL do THAT.” The woman took the hand of an SMP volunteer, looked into her eyes, and solemnly proclaimed: “You changed my mind. You’ve done well! And you’re very nice!”

Pictured left, Steven O’Neill, Volunteer Services Coordinator. Pictured right, Kay Meade, Outreach and Education Coordinator for Kent and Sussex Counties.



“You changed my mind.” That is exactly what we are attempting to do when we are out in the trenches, talking to the public about their role in preventing costly Medicare errors, abuse, and fraud. Although few people come right out and announce that they’ve gained a new perspective on healthcare safety as a result of speaking with us, many acquire new insights and act upon them, at literally every event we attend. And in the words of longtime Delaware SMP Volunteer Bob Ringer, “If I can go to an event and help even one person, it will be worth it.”